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NEA/ARP, IO/MPR BHACKETT, USUN/MR BRASHKOW

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/14/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [RS](#) [GG](#) [IR](#) [KU](#)
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED - RUSSIAN BASES IN ABKHAZIA AND
SOUTH OSSETIA

REF: STATE 24186

Classified By: Political Counselor Pete O'Donohue for reasons 1.4 b and
d

¶1. (C) PolOff on March 29 delivered reftel demarche informing Kuwait of the U.S.'s continuing rejection of Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and unease over its plans to construct bases there. PolOff's interlocutor, Fadel Al-Hasan, First Secretary in MFA's European department, indicated that he sympathized with the U.S. position but was unable to provide a substantive official GOK response at this time.

A Matter of Russian Security?

¶2. (C) Al-Hasan told PolOff he has close relations with the Russian diplomats in Kuwait, and that they told him the bases are necessary for Russian security and directly related to the U.S.-Poland missile shield talks. According to Al-Hasan, Moscow feels threatened by a potential U.S. missile defense base in Poland and intervened in Georgia to shore up Russian national security. Al-Hasan's contacts allegedly told him that Moscow is only considering temporary bases in the two provinces and regrets sending troops into South Ossetia in August 2008 because it "destroyed the trust between Russia and the E.U." Al-Hasan told PolOff he sympathized with the Georgians, saying that Kuwaitis "know what it was like to have a very strong neighbor which does as it pleases."

Wary of Russia's "Game with Iran"

¶3. (C) Al-Hasan said that despite close relations with Russia, Kuwait is uncomfortable with Moscow's "game with Iran." Obliquely referring to the S-300 missile contract, Al-Hasan said that he is wary because Kuwait would be the first country affected by any confrontation between Washington and Tehran.

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JONES